

Take Five



This breathing activity is an accessible technique that can help manage stress and calm our bodies and minds. Speak with students about why it's important to learn skills that focus our thinking and soothe our minds. Doing Take Five together is a great transition between lessons or as a calming activity to help students re-focus. As you do this activity, you can increase the time from "Take Five" to "Take Ten," or you can start with the longer timeframe with older students. An adult or student may lead this activity.

Take Five helps settle our swirling thoughts and bring clarity to a situation. Students can do this as a group, then also practice individually during the day or at home to help with sleep. An adult or a student can lead this activity by following these steps:

1. Sit in a comfortable position on the floor or in a chair with your feet on the ground. Sit up straight and relax your upper body.
2. Close your eyes and pay attention to your breath. Simply notice your breath coming in and out, but don't try to control it.
3. As you breathe in and out, keep track of your breaths by thinking, "I am breathing in one," "I am breathing out one," "I am breathing in two," "I am breathing out two."
4. Keep counting breaths until you reach ten. Return to the beginning and start again with "I am breathing in one" ... and so on.
5. If your mind wanders, notice it with gentle matter-of-factness, but without judgment. This is likely to happen at some point! If you start thinking about something, start again with the number one: "I am breathing in one" ... and so on (Roberts, 2014).

Talk with students about the challenges and the joys of this activity with the following questions: Were you able to make it to ten breaths without your mind wandering? How does your body feel after several rounds of breathing? How does your mind feel now?